



# Meeting Notes

## Design Guidelines Focus Group Meeting

**3:00 p.m. – Wednesday, July 1, 2009**

Cherry Bldg. Conference Room, 101 West Cherry Ave, Flagstaff, AZ

### 1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

#### In attendance:

Steve Dorsett, Architect  
Will Freund, Architect  
Aude Stang, Architectural Designer (Vice Chair)  
Steve Tegethoff, Architect  
Daniel Paduchowski, Architect (Chair)  
Paul Moore, Architect  
**Edwin Larsen**, City of Flagstaff  
**Darrel Barker**, City of Flagstaff  
**Roger Eastman**, City of Flagstaff  
Dennis Dixon, Contractor  
Kim Tittelbaugh, Citizen

### 2. **Focus Group Overview:**

Daniel (Chair) reminded the group of the purpose of the Focus Groups and Roger Eastman gave an overview of the new approach to organizing the issues previously identified by the group to facilitate discussion and resolution of the issues within the time frame expected, i.e. end of July, early August.

### 3. **Discussion items:**

Using the consolidated issues list provide by Roger Eastman, the group started on the issues that required further discussion.

#### 1. Define Flagstaff's design tradition

- Various themes exist in Flagstaff
- Idea of a patchwork quilt of local design traditions based on their context but these are stitched together with a common thread of unity of themes across the City of Flagstaff
- The overriding theme for Flagstaff is one of simple elegant structures that are based on the principles of balance, proportion and scale. There is no need to attaché superficial ornamentation to the outside of buildings
- Maintain a common theme to buildings based on place
- Consensus on the notion of abstracting forms and design elements from Flagstaff's history, rather than mimicking historical architecture.

Should design guidelines be applied in industrial areas?

- Agreement that we would not recommend the application of the design guidelines in industrial zones except within a specified distance of a view corridor as defined in the Regional Plan.
  - Consultants should determine which levels of the design guidelines (Levels 1-3) should apply in industrial zones, if at all.
- Consensus from the group this issue is resolved.

## 2. Define the strengths and weaknesses of the existing design guidelines:

### Strengths:

- The group acknowledged that the design guidelines are easy to work with. In the discussion around the table, most members did not speak specifically to “strengths”
- One individual had a contrary view stating that the design guidelines kept a check on growth because they were so restrictive and new development would not want to work under them.
- The flexible measures is a good idea – but refinement is needed (see below)

### Weaknesses:

- Not enough consideration for solar design aspects
- Design guidelines need to include more discussion about passive solar and solar orientation of buildings
- Suggestion (group generally agreed) that general terms are preferred in the guidelines, rather than specific numerical ranges for limitations on materials, textures, etc. For example, instead of requiring stucco to not be more than 25% of a building, rather use the phrase “dominant” material.
- Stucco is an appropriate building material and the current restrictions on stucco should be removed. But add a requirement for stucco to be painted a darker color
- Consider adding an LRV standard to the design guidelines
- The flexible measures are a good idea; but are they the correct value? Suggest that consideration be given to refining these measures and expanding them to create more of an incentive (beyond 5%)
- Comment – if some standard is required, why are flexible measures also applied to encourage it?
- Street character section should be included in the Engineering Standards. Remove the “forest road” requirement – not applicable.
- Move all STANDARDS to the zoning code, subdivision regulations, engineering standards, etc. Keep the design guidelines as GUIDELINES. Discussion and agreement on the idea of creating a resource book (Pattern Book) of what is desired in Flagstaff based on existing good practice in the City.

- Review how successful the requirement for outdoor public spaces has been? Example of the bank building near Harkins Theater on Woodlands Village Blvd. – outdoor public space faces the street and is not utilized (may be poor design though?)
- Design guidelines should include a process for appeals of a staff decision (*actually this is better placed in the zoning code itself*)
- It is difficult to legislate taste
- Design guidelines need to be flexible enough to accommodate changes in technology and the new materials that result that could be applicable in Flagstaff
- Design guidelines lack a holistic sense – too fragmented into details
- Design guidelines narrows the ability for good design – eliminates the top 25% of good design as well as the bottom 25% of poor design
- The design guidelines should be written to allow climate and context to drive appropriate design
- The design traditions of Flagstaff whether promoted through standards or guidelines need more strength – currently the other provisions of the LDC overwhelm good design and the design guidelines as they are subordinate and secondary. This may be accomplished by a reorganization of the zoning code.
- Level 3 of the design guidelines needs more work
- Expand the materials palette – allow more concrete, stucco (painted darker), non-reflective metal, etc.
- Allow the notion of Flagstaff funkiness to expand where it is appropriate in the community
- The restriction on stucco has resulted in the use of too much masonry block. Block is good and OK if used in an interesting and creative manner – too often it is bland and lacks interest.
- The color section is too ambiguous – add LRVs to define a certain minimum reflectance value

Strong agreement on the need for a Design Review Board of local residents (professionals preferred) to review new projects for consistency with adopted standards/guidelines rather than City staff. This is the best way to deal with the subjectivity that is intrinsic to evaluating design. A DRB would allow an architect to justify their design. Further discussion at the next meeting.

#### **4. Next meeting**

July 15, 2009 at 3:00 pm

#### **5. Adjournment**

4:35 p.m.

# Design Guidelines Focus Group Meeting

## Summary Notes – July 1, 2009



RESOLVED ISSUES	FURTHER DISCUSSION
Code that is easy to use and apply – user friendly to citizens and developers (create a sample user). Test with users.	
Standards versus guidelines Remove standards from chapter 16	How to yield good design? How to balance good design with the need for regulations?
Need images showing what is desired as appropriate design – pattern book	Design Review Board – Citizen & staff/peer review to deal with discretion in design
Do we need Design Guidelines? YES Revise rather than rewrite.	
Efficient/quick design review process	“Whiners’ escape”? – if you whine long enough you will get what you want! Should it be allowed?
Create a code review schedule every X years	
Refine submittal requirements and process. Concept to final. Two-step process or three-step process with pre-application meeting?	Resource requirements conflict with and obscure well designed buildings i.e. possibly reduce tree resource stds. To allow buildings to be seen?
Standards versus guidelines Decide whether to call them guidelines or standards?	What is the role of design review? Design is more than aesthetics – context, comfort, etc
Define Flagstaff design tradition. What does historic character really mean? Define. Abstract forms and design elements rather than mimic historic/arch. Vernacular Common theme but unique character districts “Funky, simple architecture”	Also Process and Procedures group - How to address design as a continuous process? (minor modifications through the process) Last minute changes an issue - does it change the character of the design?
List strengths and weaknesses from each member	Cost implications – add current cost indices into the design guidelines
	Technology advances – Green building/ LEED, etc.. Also its implications to design that may not be pure “Flagstaff”. Require or encourage “Green”? But it is more than just buildings – think about site, block, neighborhood design.
	Engineering standards dominate – more relaxed standards based on context

